

COMMENTS ON  
A REVIEW OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

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TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

COMMENTS ON OMB'S REVIEW OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Introduction

1. The Review of the Intelligence Community by OMB is a serious, well-informed, perceptive and in the main accurate assessment of where the community now stands. It is a fair and forceful paper and deserves the most earnest consideration and thoughtful response. While it identifies a number of salient problems facing the community, the study properly devotes the greater part of its inspection to CIA and particularly to the position of the DCI. It calls on the Agency and the Director to take greater leadership of the community and presents both the necessity and the opportunity to do so.

2. There are a number of points in the first five sections of the paper which are open to varying interpretations and differing explanations, but it is not the purpose of these comments to take these up in detail. The important thing is to address the thrust and purpose of the paper and the important changes which must be made.

Central Points

3. The Review recognizes that the basic layout of the intelligence community, dating from the National Security Act of 1947 and from the fundamental reorganization of CIA in 1950, has become out of date under the impact of rapidly advancing technology and the organizational adjustments to its effects. This prompts the reviewers to hold that the growth of the community has been largely "unplanned and unguided". The present outcome is a series of complicated interlocking responsibilities and relationships which, while they may appear chaotic to outside scrutiny, nevertheless work--and in the main, have worked well. There are many associations and interactions essential to the productivity of the system which will not appear on a descriptive chart.

4. The very complexity of the present intelligence system argues against a broadside reorganization, and this the review wisely understands. Rather, as the report agrees, the answer more properly lies in an approach of thoughtful gradualism, establishing first the point of leadership, providing the authority and responsibility for change, and then allowing the changes to evolve, guided by those inside the system who comprehend the origins of the system and the direction it should move in.

5. This central point is convincing argument that most of the inefficiencies and malalignments in the present system are more

TOP SECRET

surely correctible by central authority and leadership than by recourse to legislation, the outcome of which could very well be unintentionally destructive or, at the least, less informed and sensitive to the means of productive change.

6. The best, most efficient and least disruptive way to bring about improvement and modernization of the community is to confer by Presidential directive to the DCI the authority and responsibility to effect the changes required. This is truest for the field of resource management.

7. Legislation, directives and Presidential letters to the DCI have focussed on the substantive authority of the DCI. These orders have been silent as to the DCI's role in resource management, while at the same time resource problems have multiplied and grown in size and cost until they are now the main concern of the community and the principal reason for the Review.

8. The key need is for the President to indicate in writing and beyond question that the DCI has his full and virtually unquestioning support and that he looks to him to make the necessary decisions for the community as acting in the President's behalf. The President's intent must be instilled in the heads of the community's principal

TOP SECRET

components so that it is clear that circumventions through whatever channels will not be condoned and that independent activity without the concurrence of the DCI will not be acceptable. Given this kind of Presidential support and a wide general sense of common purpose throughout the community, the way is open to achieving the President's objectives.

The Options

9. The options presented in the Review, while only three in number, well exhaust the range of possibilities and problems inherent in a change of the scope proposed:

a. Option 3 - A Coordinator of National Intelligence - is generally considered ineffective. While some of the suggested functions would be needed by a powerful DCI, they should not be performed by the DCI himself. The disadvantages cited in the report by themselves effectively demolish this alternative.

b. Option 1 - A Director of National Intelligence - would certainly require major legislation and a complex review and re-enactment of most of the directives governing the community. As the report observes, the concentration of such sensitive power in one man would not go unnoticed by the press and public and would be fiercely resisted by State and Defense--with good reason. The political

TOP SECRET

vulnerability of such a position promises a sequence of holders and disruptive repercussions each time a new man is named.

c. Option 2 - A Director of Central Intelligence - with part of what is now CIA set apart. This aspect alone involves new legislation with its attendant drawbacks. It is worth noting that in the National Security Act of 1947, much of the power of the DCI and CIA in combination is conferred on the Agency, not the DCI. This in the law will need change. The proposal for separation also overlooks what will not appear in diagrams--the productive two-way relationships between producers and collectors which in many instances has been at the heart of the Agency's success.

Another Option

10. Although much of what is proposed in Option 2 is wise and beneficial, a modification of it, retaining its central objective of a strong DCI, might be more feasible and effective.

11. Essentially what is offered here is a strong DCI, as in Option 2, with clear and explicit Presidential authority and community staff mechanisms to assist him. The lack of a DCI role of this character heretofore does not derive from a failure to delegate responsibility for CIA and to take active part in resource management. Rather it results from the absence of clear authority to enter the

resource area beyond CIA's borders and a recognition that to do so would have been to bring on a series of unproductive skirmishes and adversary actions with those holding clearer title to those assets.

12. With this bar out of the way, the DCI would be free, if not required, not only to move into community matters of substance, as heretofore, but into resources as well. As stated in Option No. 2, he would have senior status in the community, would serve as principal intelligence adviser to the President and the NSC, would produce national intelligence (as now) and would, in addition, make recommendations to the President on intelligence programs and budgets of CIA and of the Department of Defense, present a consolidated intelligence budget to OMB and participate in resource decisions on acquisition, allocation, evaluation and discontinuance. To accomplish all this, the DCI quite obviously would find it necessary to delegate much more of his day-to-day management of the Agency than has been necessary up to now.

13. A critically important element in the DCI's new role in resources would be his responsibility for a single coordinated intelligence budget. It is not without significance that this role is already considered to be his by Congress in suggestions that the DCI might discuss the community's budget with the Appropriations

TOP SECRET

Committees. Authority for the DCI in this regard already exists in Section 5 of the CIA Act of 1949, amended. Inasmuch as the key resource decisions are made in the budget stage, often reversing the thrust of earlier program decisions, the DCI's overview of the budgets of the community would put him squarely in the middle of the key resource gateway.

14. An important first use of the DCI's budgetary authority would be to deal with the costs of the community's activities. The Review notes that these have become "exceedingly expensive". Fragmented authority and weak resource controls are only two of the reasons. Other causes are the desire for universality in coverage, the pressure for currency, the drive of urgency and timeliness, the multiplicity of contingency plans and their requirements, the attractions of R&D and new systems and the lack of authority not to do a number of things. It is not out of place to note that the impetus behind many of these causes and pressures comes from outside the community and not from the "internal values" within the system.

15. The sphere of the DCI's power and responsibility would be the national intelligence area--its assets and products; Defense would remain responsible for tactical intelligence needs and means. The dividing line between "national" and "tactical" has always been

TOP SECRET

a shifting one and subject to bitterly contested claims. A strong, Presidentially backed DCI would be able to do much to solve or reduce this long-standing problem.

Substantive Aspects

16. The report devotes considerable attention to the substantive production of the community, rightly, since it is in this that the community establishes its value to the nation. The fact that the Review says that improvement is needed is sufficient reason to accept the proposition and attempt to meet the need.

17. A more sharply focussed and accurately relevant substantive production effort depends in large part on knowing what the consumer wants and being free to drop coverage of what he does not want. Problems of direction in this sense originate outside the community in considerable part. There has never been any satisfactory means of feedback from the policy-level users; they are busy, unaware of the cost and effort behind what they get, and have never been constrained from asking for more. Likewise, there has never been any conscious, authoritative and dependable release of the intelligence community from covering all manner of areas, functions, developments and trends. As a result the predictable reaction has been to attempt to be ready for any requests, any curiosities, any needs, just in case.

TOP SECRET

That this drives up costs and manpower needs from collection through production is self-evident.

18. The basis for real substantive improvement lies in concentration and in being permitted to concentrate when resources are not enough to cover everything. Efforts now under way to establish a modern, coherent system of objectives and priorities for substantive effort are steps toward enabling a rational concentration to come about in tune with current national objectives. This system will be useful to identify and protect the areas of high importance and to mark the areas of marginal use for re-examination and discard. A strong DCI with good substantive advice can make these selections stick, and he can extend this discrimination even into the virtually sacrosanct precincts of efforts against the USSR and Communist China. Not everything about these denied areas is worth large outlays to collect and analyze; real savings of notable magnitude can be realized from sharper scrutiny of what is being done on these problems. To do this politically requires the DCI to be in the closest touch with the concerns of the highest levels of decision making.

19. Because of the sensible proposition that the best talent of the community should be put to the toughest problems and because a

TOP SECRET

wide variety of explanations and interpretations needs to be considered, as the Review aptly observes, it is useful to retain in national intelligence production, particularly for National Estimates, the present confederal process of reaching conclusions. True understanding of the fragmentary evidence that can be obtained on the hard questions is not so readily achieved that one can dispense with hearing all parties concerned. Questions are often so technically complex that all manner of expertise must be mustered to deal with them. Thus a system of "competing centers", including some in the military services, and a variety of participations in common substantive analyses is useful and should be preserved. It is far wiser and is preferable to a single "school solution" imposed from above which prompts dissenting views to seek expression through channels outside the intelligence community.

On the Department of Defense

20. It is not the purpose of these comments to respond to the Review with detailed suggestions for the conduct of intelligence activities in and by the Department of Defense. Nevertheless, certain broad choices exist for the Secretary of Defense which can materially affect the ability of the DCI, however strongly supported from the White House, to fulfill his responsibilities to the President for national intelligence.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

21. Major recent developments which have great potential to assist the DCI are the assignment of intelligence resource responsibilities to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Administration and the creation of the position of a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. These actions have already brought about considerable progress toward centralized management of DOD's large and scattered resources. Continuation and expansion of these assignments, or the creation of an Assistant Secretary of Defense or a Special Assistant for Intelligence, is necessary to strengthen the DCI's authority over Defense intelligence resources, operating through a strong central official in Defense who responds to the DCI as acting for the President for the whole community.

22. A number of decisions regarding Defense intelligence must be left to the Secretary of Defense: the decision to establish an Assistant Secretary for Intelligence; the retention or merger of individual Defense collection agencies; and the management of agreed tactical intelligence operations. But the decisions of the DCI with respect to the major realignments of function suggested in the Review will have to be carried out by Defense when ordered. Needless to say, any judgments in this connection will require the fullest participation

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

of Defense authorities at all levels. This decision process by  
consensus and consent is far preferable to a summary reshuffling  
implied in the Review.

TOP SECRET

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